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ABSTRACT

An examination of national higher education policy formation focuses on the shift in relationships of the central actors in the policy formation process. It is argued that whereas the federal government, together with the scientific community and foundations, previously had the dominant voice, the corporate community, in partnership with leaders of research universities, has become more vocal and taken a more active position. The Business-Higher Education Forum served as the primary source of information for the study. After a review of the higher education policy literature, the policy questions preoccupying educators since World War II and the major political and economic constituencies built around them are discussed. The current legislative agenda of the Business-Higher Education Forum is outlined in this context. Subsequent chapters address: the social origin, education, career paths, and activities of corporate and university leaders; the role of university presidents in the formation of public policy; bases of corporate interest in higher education; the reports produced jointly by corporate and university leaders in the Business-Higher Education Forum, focusing on forum members as political actors and the domination of the forum's agenda by business concerns; and the implications of neo-Marxian theory for the forum and postsecondary education. (MSE)

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